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CROSS-CULTURAL APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOR AND LEARNING.

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THE TEACHER AND THE SCHOOL SYSTEM SERVE AS THE KEY MEDIATORS IN THE ACCULTURATION OF STUDENTS FROM DEVIANT SUBCULTURES. HOWEVER, THE TEACHER'S COMMITMENT TO THE ETHICS OF WORK AND COMPETITION, HER FUTURE-ORIENTED VALUE SYSTEM, AND HER CONCEPT OF A FATHER-DOMINATED NUCLEAR FAMILY STRUCTURE TEND TO ALIENATE HER FROM HER STUDENTS. AS A RESULT, MANY INDIAN AND EAST HARLEM CHILDREN, WHOSE CULTURE IS DIFFERENT FROM HERS, MAY NEVER ACQUIRE THE TOOLS FOR FULL ACCULTURATION. ALIENATION BETWEEN STUDENT AND TEACHER IS FURTHER REINFORCED BY THE CHILD'S CONCEPT OF THE TEACHER AS A SUCCESS IN A HOSTILE CULTURE AND BY THE TEACHER'S MATERIALISTIC MOTIVATION FOR CHOOSING HER PROFESSION. MOREOVER, THE EDUCATOR'S OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL, INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION OF STUDENTS IS OFTEN LIMITED BY ADMINISTRATIVE PROSCRIPTIONS. SEVERAL IMPORTANT STEPS IN TEACHER EDUCATION CAN ASSURE A MORE SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL BRIDGE BETWEEN STUDENT AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL. THE STAFF SHOULD UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE PRESENCE OF ALIEN SUBCULTURES IN THEIR SCHOOL AND INITIATE MEASURES FOR PARENT COOPERATION AND STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS FOR DEVELOPING SKILLS AND RAISING THE ASPIRATION LEVEL. TEACHERS SHOULD ALSO EXHIBIT FLEXIBILITY IN RECOGNIZING AND REWARDING EVIDENCES OF NONVERBAL ACHIEVEMENT. (NC)

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CROSS-CULTURAL APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOR AND LEARNING

Speech By Vernon F. Haubrich

July 28, 1965

When human beings share a design for living which is implicit as well as explicit and when this design for living includes values, outlooks, conditions, and considerations, we are talking about the way a people live, we're talking about, in short, a culture. The central issue that's concerning this conference and that concerns the general topic we are going to examine during the next few minutes is the whole problem of subcultures within the American society.

The issue, of course, is that educators have been attempting to deal with cultures and subcultures for many years and have, by and large, been relatively successful with some and relatively unsuccessful with others. If we may proceed to a diagnosis of the successful and the unsuccessful situations, I think it may help us before we get to the point of making specific recommendations.

When we consider the question of pathology in the classroom context, one must look at the products of the subcultures in our society whether these subcultures be Mexican-American children, Negro-American youth, Indians on or off the reservations, or any other subculture which is, in part, dysfunctional and discontinuous with the larger American culture. The process of acculturation or internationalization of culture; that process by which an individual takes on the modes of thought and action and feeling and response of a particular culture, is not operating for major groups in the American society today.

The question of culture is one that is a dynamic, operating to create in the young child those aspirational modes and categories of thought which will enable him to function in a larger society. Additionally, culture is created by adults in the sense that certain increments are added and other increments are changed from the total culture. This process must be viewed as one that is in a state of change, for in American society one of the classic principles has been the larger society has shifted when certain kinds of pressures have been put on it to serve particular subcultures. Today we are witnessing the powerful pressure of the civil rights movement, which is attempting to create certain fundamental changes in jobs, housing, and education, so that all American children may more fully participate in the fruits of this society. Strangely, the federal government is partly financing the revolution in civil rights.

One of the key mediators of the cultural phenomenon we are calling acculturation, has been and will continue to be the teacher. The teacher brings a part of the larger culture to the child and the teacher and the

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school have been one of the broad avenues groups have traveled to take a place in the sun in our society. However, you who teach and administer are not in the school as neutral agents, but as agents that are filled with throughts and emotions and modes of aspirations and desires and hopes and fears and all things that make up a human being. The teacher brings values to the classroom, she brings her mode of thinking, she brings her religion, she brings her background, she brings her present potentialities and she brings what she feels is truly important for children.

I think it might be helpful if we could take just a moment to look at those things which tend to impel teachers to have them place constraints on children in various ways and on the kinds of emphases which the teacher considers as valuable in and out of the classroom.

First, the teacher is committed, in its broadest sense, to the competitive ethic in American society. The manner in which she structures her classroom, the grades that she gives, the procedure by which she calls on children, the thousand and one little nuances to encourage children to move ahead, to succeed, and to become "winners."

Secondly, the teacher is value-oriented to a future which is bound to be richer than the present or the past. Since her earliest days the teacher has been encouraged to postpone immediate gratifications for future realization and gain. One saves his money so that one can purchase something in the future which is valuable. One conserves the lumber in the forest because it is our responsibility to future generations. One does not marry at an exceptionally early age because one must first finish college. Bound up with this particular value of a future time orientation is the whole notion that time is in itself an exceptionally important commodity. Time is money, it is part of the entire outlook of the teacher. We must hurry and finish. The basis of many tests in America is based on a timed work period. The concept that the child should plan for Friday's test or Thursday's test or Wednesday's review is part of her entire orientation. Once we lose time we can never regain it.

A third value that has been emphasized by teachers is what they bring to the classroom is the ethic of work. Work in and of itself is a good thing and so by and large what we have done is that we have not only placed a value on it, we have routinized it. It is an expectation which the teacher brings to the classroom and assumes each child will want to do. From work, of course, comes status, prestige, and a better community image. It brings the kinds of artifacts and symbols which are so terribly important to most of the people in our culture.

A fourth value the teacher brings to the classroom is that our society is organized into families and these family groups are separate and, in most cases, nuclear. The father is the head of the family and there is a mother and there are children. Only rarely do we ever even admit that others inhabit the family such as uncles, aunts, grandfathers, or grandmothers.

The administration brings to the classroom the same things that teachers and all those who are concerned with schools bring to the classroom. They bring the values that are both implicit and explicit in an industrial, technological, bureaucratic, democratic society. They bring the values that aid that society to function, that provide it with the kind of drive and spirit which has carried it forward and the kind of organized effort necessary for it to continue to move forward.

A question which must be raised at this time regarding what culture the teacher carries to the classroom is the question of the teachers' own aspirations within the classroom scene. The issue of why the teacher happens to find himself in that classroom, the expectancies he has for himself and his view of the profession is crucial. While this is a subcultural problem for the teacher, teacher selection, and teacher recruitment, and I shall treat this with a bit more length in my next paper, I should mention at this time that the varying nature of who desires to be in the classroom in modern American society, the nature of who is recruited, and the length of time that the average teacher actually teaches is a crucial one which must occupy at least some attention by administrators and college officials alike. A brief example should suffice.

In some research we carried on very recently we were convinced that one of the major reasons why teachers entered the profession of teaching was for a sense of security--especially among the young women. Great pressures have been brought to bear upon many young women in college for some vocational orientation in lieu of, or in addition to a husband. This great pressure resulted in the choice of a relatively easy road to professional status, namely teaching. In many cases, we found that the prime motive was not the transmission of the culture or desire to impart skills and abilities, but the major orientation was one of security and something to "fall back on" as the teachers would put it. In our research we dubbed this the "mattress philosophy" of the prospective teacher. When we say that the teacher knows little about cultural change, subcultures within the larger American society or ways to reach these individuals at this time, one is really saying that the conditions that have made this necessary lie within those who have chosen to become teachers and those who select and train them as teachers.

Before looking at the kinds of cultural conflicts which both teachers, children, and schools seem to be facing in the second half of this century let us look at the basic structure and organization of schools in America today to see if the values in that school system are possible focal points for looking at types of cultural conflicts which may come about.

I think it is important to know that the American school system today is, by and large, patterned after classic lines of bureaucratic endeavor. A bureaucracy is a formal organization and the classic analysis made by Max Weber in 1922, is still valid. Weber indicated that a bureaucracy develops whenever large scale organizations wish to achieve a degree of efficiency and rationality of operation. And this efficiency is usually demanded by the need for economy, fairness, and "equalitarianism." Weber indicates that a bureaucracy involves a division of duties and that these duties adhere to the office which carries them out. Principals have certain duties which teachers do not have and teachers have certain duties which principals do not have even though they are members of the same organization. The same would be true of directors of curriculum, superintendents, guidance workers, and so forth. The regulations which permitted individuals to assume these various offices are publicly stated and in most cases controlled by license or by examination or by both. These licenses and examinations are often sanctioned through laws or through official regulations which are stated by state agencies. These regulations are stated in such a way so as to be impersonal and so as to provide the greatest assessability by all on an equalitarian basis. Specific instructions in each specific case are not necessary because the classic rules are stated and are followed by all within the system. Any example can be given.

A school system decides, for whatever reason, that any child will not be promoted to the second grade unless he has successfully completed the first grade reader. A test is given, he does not complete the first grade reader and consequently he has failed and he is retained in grade one. In a similar fashion another rule may state that a child will not enter the seventh grade unless he has successfully completed or achieved the level of the fifth grade in reading. A child comes to be admitted to the seventh grade, the test indicates that he's below the fifth grade level and he is not admitted. He is sent to the sixth grade. Sometimes rather ludicrous situations occur; for example, to teach in a particular state a license is required. To obtain that license, one must have completed student teaching. A teacher shows up in that particular state with six years of successful teaching but upon examining the record, a bureaucrat or a person in charge of certification in a state finds that there was no student teaching. Result: no license. Nothing against the individual you understand, just that the rule has not been met.

Additionally, one should know at this time that the existence of these rules requires the use of categorical thinking, or categorization, in order that individual problems and cases are classified on the basis of the rules and are treated in the way the rules are stated. Classically, a bureaucracy exhibits the will of the electorate or the body politic by either the election of the top officials in the bureaucracy such as the state superintendent or a board of education or through the control of the political offices of the Governor and the State Legislature. It is most important to note that the technical bureaucracy within a state, federal, or local area, as well as a public school system, does not depend upon election.

We should note at this time that the chief merit of any bureaucracy is its technical efficiency. A premium is placed upon optimal returns on optimal inputs. Precision, expert control, continuity and speed, are the essence and the very heart of bureaucratic structure. Robert Merton, the distinguished sociologist at Columbia University, has noted that there have been many individuals who have taken a dim view of bureaucratic structure and have indicated that there are often negative aspects of bureaucracy. Veblen, for example, indicated that a genuine bureaucracy resulted in a trained incapacity to work. Dewey noted that there was an occupational psychosis that went with a bureaucracy. Whenever we have actions on the part of a bureaucracy that are based on training, skills, outlook, education, and demeanor which have been successfully applied in past situations and then are blindly applied in present situations that are obviously inappropriate, we have what we call a professional trained incapacity to make judgments. A professional cannot become, in all respects, a bureaucrat. A professional depends cleanly and clearly upon the individual diagnosis of each unique situation. Dewey's notion that the precision, reliability, and efficiency of an organization would produce individuals with special preferences, antipathies, and discriminations is obvious. It also means that these particular bureaucratic values may operate to the disadvantage of individuals and groups as well as for their benefit.

We should note, however, that bureaucracies are not dysfunctional in and of themselves. An effective bureaucracy demands a reliability of response and a strict devotion to the kinds of regulations that are set forward in manuals and procedures. Indeed, if each and every teacher was not subject to certain kinds of constraints we would be in a mess. If individual principals who desire to dismiss school on certain days and to hold school longer at the end of the year, we would again be in a mess. So the question of reliability and regulations are not bad in and of themselves, they only become bad when applied to a particular situation. These situations we will be looking at shortly. What we are really

talking about is when rules are transformed into absolute prerequisites and requirements, then we are in deep trouble. The kind of conservatism which is engendered and the kind of timidity which comes from a classic adherence to lesson plans which are absolutes to be required, and day-to-day operations which are specified, is well known to all of you who are listening today.

Now the kind of convergence that occurs at this point is a child entering school, meeting a teacher who is operating in a school setting, and who is a product of that same culture which has been described as broadly bureaucratic. A teacher is, if you will excuse the expression, a winner in the race for success and achievement. As we are well aware, not all individuals graduate from our school systems; in fact, that is part of the problem we are examining today. The teacher, however, has by definition graduated from the school system. Additionally, she has graduated from the higher echelon of the school system which in most cases only reinforces the very kind of bureaucratic structure which is expected. No one will graduate from college unless they have X number of credits. No one will graduate unless they have been able to complete a certain number of term papers. No one will graduate who insults professors in each class; one professor perhaps, many, never.

If we can then assume that, in its broad perspective, both the school and the teacher have similar outlooks, have been trained in a similar way, have broadly shared the same kinds of attitudes, values, dispositions, and concerns together, then we may say that if a child comes to that school and continues through that school who does not share the same kinds of outlooks, concerns, and aspirations, there will be a dysfunction; there will be a discontinuity between the school and the teacher on the one hand, and the particular child on the other. This is nothing against the teacher of the school nor is it anything against the child; it merely means that we are describing something and to explain how it comes about. We must be honest enough to at least indicate that there are certain values that we do hold, and that these values conflict and run smack into other people's values. The important thing is if people do not hold the school's values there are certain kinds of modifications which can be made, both in the manner in which we approach individuals and the kinds of things which we emphasize in school so as to allow, provide, and encourage the school to meet all the children of all the people in a relatively successful fashion.

I should now like to turn to the kind of subcultures with which I have had some experience and indicate the kinds of divergencies, discontinuities, and dysfunctionalities which occur when some children meet the school, the teacher, and the bureaucratic structure which we have been describing.

Many Indian children in these United States live on reservations that are legal ghettos and which are sanctioned by local, state, and federal governments. These ghettos have pathetic living conditions and the dynamics of these kinds of conditions have resulted in a series of statistics which are extraordinarily astounding. The average Indian gives up 25 years a quarter of a century, of his life to live on these reservations. While you and I may look forward to a life span of approximately 65-70 years, the Indian can look forward to no more than 41-46 years depending upon the section of the country in which he happens to live. He gives three times the number of children in infant mortality that you or I do. He has five times our tuberculosis rate. The statistics are all so dreary that they are quite depressing. The physical setting for many Indians in this country is dismal, pathetic, astounding, and a shame for all of us.

In spite of all these things the Indian does bring, when he begins school in either kindergarten or first grade, a set of values which he has begun to learn on his reservation, in his family, and in his peer group. He believes, basically, that he is in harmony with nature; that nature will provide for man if he will behave as he should and obeys nature's laws. He is not a master of nature as many of us believe but he is a person who is in harmony and continuous with nature. His time orientation, in many cases, is vastly different from the majority culture. The future, the past, the present all blend into a kind of uni-time context in which the issue of whether we have to postpone gratifications is not even a relevant question.

Additionally, some Indians believe that if they acquire too many goods someone will come along to take them away. The notion that he should save today for tomorrow has resulted in some experiences which teach that when one has too much he inevitably loses it. The history of Indians being moved across the country and the manner in which they have had their lands, their resources, indeed their very being expropriated only reaffirms this fundamental belief which they hold.

In many tribes a society is based on a matrilineal family not a patrilineal family. A family lives together in an extended family situation where mothers, fathers, children, aunts, uncles, grandfathers, and grandmothers live in harmony and peace with one another.

The acquisition of goods, artifacts, and things has very little meaning for some Indian children. Consequently, there is a lack of desire or drive to succeed, to do the things that are necessary to school achievement. Let me give a specific example of an Indian child that I observed in a first grade situation. The Indian child was asked a question by the

teacher and he indicated that he did not know the answer to the question. The teacher then called on another child and that child indicated that he didn't know the answer. She proceeded around the room and each child in turn indicated that he did not know the answer. One of the values of this particular tribe is that there should never be an embarrassement of one Indian by another of his tribe. The children did not answer the question after the first had failed because they did not want to embarrass him by indicating their superiority. Basically, the value of humility, winning only occasionally, and a sense of equalitarianism is part of the entire ethic of this tribe.

Cooperation is stressed far more than competition. Consequently, when the Indian child does not respond in the fashion that teachers wish, the child becomes, in the view of the teacher, strong-willed or stubborn. On one occasion I observed a nursery school in which the teacher had had it with one small child. She indicated to him, "You can go and come back when you are ready." Of course the child left the room and never came back.

Let me shift to another example in the schools of East Harlem. In these schools many children live in extraordinarily small apartments with very large families. In some cases there is a great deal of noise within an apartment and many children from the seventh grade or earlier, do not spend a great deal of time at home in the evening. They are sometimes very late for class in the morning because they have spent a great deal of time on the street. They just can't stand it in the apartment. Consequently, there is a great deal of listlessness, there are children who are sleeping from time to time just because they are simply tired. Teacher's reaction to this of course can be understood--the children are lazy. The interpretation and the observation just do not mesh at all.

In some ways children in the East Harlem schools took on many of the aspirations of the teachers and the larger community about them. But they had very few ways in which to realize these kinds of aspirations. For an example, one child came running up to a student teacher quite excitedly. He was in the ninth grade grade, and he indicated that now he could go to any special high school in the city of New York. New York City gives special examinations for these high schools and he was quite excited about the prospect. The student teacher knowing that the child had not achieved terribly well in school, had certain kinds of basic problems in terms of reading comprehension and was probably not even going to graduate from the ninth grade, was astounded by the statement and indicated to the child, "Well, how do you know that you are going to this special high school?" The student said, "Well I just found out what my I. Q. was and it's perfect." Somewhat shaken by this statement

the student teacher asked, "If you know what your I.Q. is and it's perfect, you can tell me what it is?" The child answered, "Of course, it's 20/20."

Now this very brief example indicates that we have many children in schools who are living on the fringes of our culture. They are living with some of the artifacts and some of the surface manifestations of the culture, without ever having had the tools to participate fully in that same culture.

The major brunt of this discussion had been that there are many many children who are living in subcultures who bring to the school a somewhat different world than the teacher expects children to have. I think it quite important to state at this time that I do feel that bridges between value systems can be constructed, that schools can reach these children, that a great deal can be done so as to provide the kind of equalitarian setting in which people do have a fair shake at the prospect of achievement in our society. I should like to turn to these in a moment but before I do let me note two or three items which we must keep in mind before we go to the kinds of bridges we can build.

The relative effect of the subcultures on the personality of a child occurs not at any one age but is a continuous dynamic from the time the child is born until the time that he has learned relatively mature patterns of action in the society in which he lives. There is no question in my mind that there is a terrifically important formative influence of early childhood training and preschool education which is crucial in terms of the child's viewpoint, outlook, skills, habits, perceptions, and auditory-visual discriminations. I would like to also indicate that the institutional structure in which he lives as a child, as a later adolescent, and as an adult is absolutely crucial as well. The conditions of life, for example, poverty under which he lives have a most pervasive effect on his entire outlook and I think that I would emphasize again as being absolutely crucial to the total dynamic structure that affects the growing child's early adolescent outlook. William H. Sewell, writing in the American Journal of Sociology in September 1952, indicates that the fundamental factor that seems responsible for personality development is not necessarily the particular methods or devices used in training the child such as cradle boards, tissue paper, lack of attention, speaking and listening, etc. by themselves but rather and I quote now, "the whole personal social situation in which these practices find their expression including the attitudes and behavior of the mother." We must admit that the childhood experience lays the foundation for the adult personality but it is not the entire story. The continuing social structure is crucial.

In the past two years I have come to believe that the impact of a ghetto on the life of a child early and late adolescence is absolutely crucial. There are many ghettos in our society, in fact some people have suggested that Park Avenue, Scarsdale, New York; Royal Oak, Michigan; Winnetka, Illinois, and other fashionable areas of living are indeed ghettos in and of themselves. However, I am talking about, at this juncture, the ghetto by which there exists an enforced separation of certain individuals from the larger society based either on poverty, on fear, on the color of one's skin, on religion, or whatever. The ghetto, for example, of the Indian reservation is almost total. The impact on the Indian child is quite unbelievable. The longer I see children and childhood and adolescents that have lived in a ghettoized situation and one that is legally sanctioned and enforced, the more I'm convinced that the issue of intelligence, of responsiveness and an ability to participate in the larger society means that the larger society and these ghettos must merge. I am not saying that individuals must give up their distinctive sense of being. I am not indicating that an individual must lose his identity so as to become successful in our society. I am saying, however, that whenever a society sets up a ghettoized situation in which individuals are placed in a restricted caste relationship to the rest of the society, you are going to have a nonfunctioning, nonintelligent, nonresponsive culture which does a disservice to the democratic ethic.

A last point that should be made on this. There are two Indian tribes in the State of Washington that should receive your attention. One is still ghettoized and was ghettoized from the time that the white man came; the second never had a reservation and it was entirely dispersed by the white man's culture. The only reason the second tribe comes together at this time is for the purpose of suing the United States Government. The second tribe has occupations that range from professor and doctor and lawyer and teacher to that of plumber and bricklayer, and bum. The first tribe which is still ghettoized and has virtually a deadline running between its boundaries and the local community has had in its entire history, one college graduate. It has a phenomenal dropout rate in which there are fewer than 3% of the tribe's children in the local high school while at the first grade level they start 39% of the children in that school system.

The issue that faces you and I today is that the schools in big cities and small towns throughout the entire nation are in trouble because some formerly ghettoized groups, especially the Negro-Americans, are not allowing the ghetto to continue. They are not allowing us to forget them for they wish to become acculturated and still retain their own individual identity. I think this is possible and I should like to turn to these kind of possibilities and procedures.

The following "bridges" between the school - teacher on the one hand and the child - family on the other are intended to be suggestive and exploratory.

First, it is necessary for the teachers and administrators serving disadvantaged subcultures to have a basic understanding of the spirit, ethics, and values of the subculture. Hopefully this would include the strengths and problems of the group.

Secondly, it is essential for teachers and administrators to admit that the problems exist and that the culture of the school and family are somewhat divergent and discontinuous. The school that "has no problems" or teachers who can not recognize that divergencies exist will find the job of teaching the child impossible.

Third, there should be a joint search--administrators, teachers, and parents or guardians--for points of agreement, baselines for start and a frank exchange of values and purposes. The school that assumes that all of the changes must be on the part of parents and children will find the sledding extremely tough.

Fourth, teachers and administrators must develop, on the basis of the diagnosis of the child, conferences with parents and an understanding of the culture, strategies for approaching the child with the skills and abilities necessary for success in an industrial, technological society.

Fifth, it may be that the school personnel will be able to value and encourage varying abilities and achievements that diverge from the usual verbal-achievement syndrome. Teachers and administrators may be able to recognize and reward other achievements in the areas of physical, artistic and aesthetic modes.

Sixth, we must build these bridges at the source of our profession--teacher education. To this point I will speak at length tomorrow.

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